(iv) Pursuing with local authorities for expeditious clearance of cell sites.

(c) According to the Telecom Service Providers, shortage of spectrum is a key factor for degradation in performance and quality of service.

(d) Department of Telecommunications has instructed service providers to set up redressal mechanism at call centre level and the appellate authority level. Consumer can also approach Public Grievances (PG) cell of Department of Telecommunications. In addition, there are options of Consumer Courts and Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT) (for a group of consumers).

Global positioning system projects

1821. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India is likely to quit European Union led global positioning system projects;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government have taken a decision on the alternative to the system; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) Government is cooperating with Russia in their Global Navigation Satellite System (GLONASS). Government has also approved the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) project.

Low take-up service in rural areas

1822. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that despite the growth of mobile telephones, the

growth of mobile subscribers, growth of tele-density, the take up service in India is still very low especially in rural areas;

(b) if so, what are the measures taken to increase the services to a satisfactory level; and

(c) whether there is any specific demand from telecom industry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEELAHMAD): (a) The mobile telephones have grown at a Compounded Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 90% from 13.30 million in 2002-03 to 156.40 million by 31.01.2007. Overall teledensity of the country is 17.45% (as on 31.10.2007). However, the rural teledensity in the country is 1.86% as on 31.01.2007.

(b) The following measures are being taken to increase the services to a satisfactory level:

(i) BSNL have provided cellular mobile coverage to the significant number of villages with the population greater than 5000. BSNL presently plans to extend its coverage to the villages with population of 1000. BSNL has also enters into an agreement with DOT (Universal Service Obligation Fund) to provide Rural Household DELs (Direct Exchange Lines) in 1,267 specified SDCAs (Short Distance Charging Areas) upto 2007 and provided 1,51,644 in these areas upto 31st January, 2007. BSNL is also deploying WLL (Wireless in Local Loop) network in rural areas to meet the demand of telephone connections beyond 5.0 kms where telephone connections is not possible on land line. BSNL has also participated in the tender floated by USOF, DOT for provision of mobile services in rural and remote areas.

(ii) TRAI (Telecom Regulatory Authority of India) has taken several initiatives for facilitating growth in telecom services and reduction in tariff. Some of these include, Introduction of Unified Access Licensing Regime, Reduction of ADC (Access Deficit Charge), Implementation of IUC Regime (Interconnection Usage Charge Regime), Recommendation on Reduction in license fee, Establishing USO Fund (Universal Service Obligation Fund) for provision of telecom services in rural areas, etc. Besides fixation of tariffs by TRAI for roaming services in cellular mobile telephony,

Standard Tariff package for fixed telephony in rural areas and cost-based tariff fixation for domestic and international leased circuits.

(c) No, Sir.

Jobs generated

1823. SHRI URKHAO GWRA BRAHMA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the approximate figure of jobs generated under the Communication and Information Technology in the country till the end of 2006;

(b) the actual number of Community Information Centres (CICs) throughout the country and their functional status as on date; and

(c) the achievements made through CICs in taking IT education to the common people to bridge the urban-rural gap?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEELAHMAD): (a) As per NASSCOM (National Association of Software and Service Companies) total employment in software and services (excluding Hardware) estimated to be 16.3 lakhs in 2006-07. The employment in the Hardware Industry as on March, 2006 was about 4.2 lakhs.

(b) and (c) Department of Information Technology (DIT) has taken up an initiative for setting up of Community Information Centres (CICs) in the hilly and far-flung areas of the country to bring the benefits of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) to the people for socio-economic development of these regions and to alleviate the digital divide between urban and non-urban areas. A total of 693 CICs have been set up in 8 North-Eastern-States, J&K, Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshadweep.

The CICs provide basic services like Internet browsing, e-mail and training to local community in computer fundamentals. CICs also provide several Government to Citizen (G2C)/Citizen Centric services. Selected CICs also conduct the Course on Computer Concepts (CCC) of DOEACC Society and Computer Literacy Programme (CLP) of Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU). A total of 223615 persons in North-Eastern States